

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

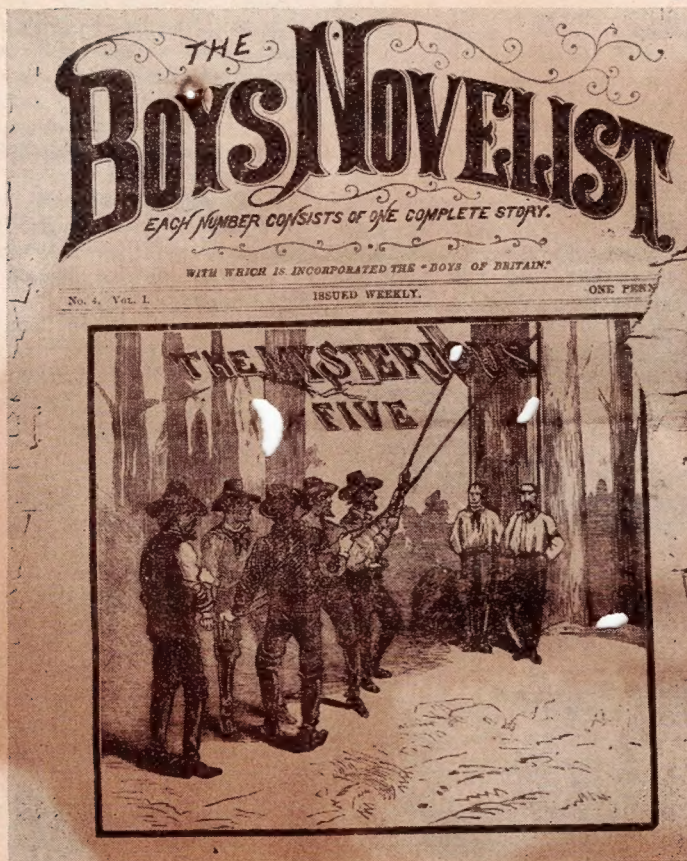
Vol. 21 No. 4

April 1953

Whole Number 247

## IS INTEREST IN DIME NOVELS DYING?

By George T. Flaum



Photography courtesy Charles Duprez. Novel loaned by Ralph F. Cummings.



## THE BOYS NOVELIST

A very rare English weekly published by William Cate of 32 Bouverie Street, London, England. No. 4 is dated January 29, 1887 and it is not believed very many more numbers were published. Black and White, 12 x 9 inches, 16 pages, very much resembled a Tousey publication. The title of the first four issues were as follows:

1. The Locked League
2. The Red Pirate
3. The Hand of Fate
4. The Mysterious Five

No. 4 is a story of western banditry around Cheyenne, Wyoming and well may have been lifted from some American publication.

## COINCIDENCE?

By George French

In March, 1895, when I was a youngster of 13 and lived on the old farm in Maine, one day my older brother and I walked 6 miles to attend a "trial" in which several boys whom we knew appeared as witnesses against a farmer who was said to have been holding secret conclaves with another farmer's wife. There were at least 2 feet of packed snow in the road that day, and the skies were heavy and dark when we left.

At noon we got a supply of cheese and crackers and dropped in on a somewhat older boy friend who had fitted up an old woodshed in which

to sell candy, soda, pencils and dime novels, the only place where they were sold up there nearer to our home than Portland, 42 miles away.

The boy's name was Jesse Pray, and he had had a rubber stamp made which he used on his novels, etc. It read "Jesse Pray Department Store, East Parsonsfield, Maine", etc., etc. There were not over two dozen houses in the entire village, so you will smile with me at his vanity. So we sat there and munched crackers and happily looked over his small pile of New York Detective and Comic Libraries—all he had—and managed to dig out 10¢ for a big yellow novel entitled "The James Boys and the Preacher Detective, 'Old Saddlebags'." In fact I guess the title read "Old Saddlebags, the Preacher Detective".

At 4 p.m. we started homeward in a pouring rain which, ere we had walked two miles, had softened the rain so that at every other step our feet would sink into melted snow and ice for over a foot.

It seemed as though we never should get home to enjoy that James Boys story by a warm kitchen stove. Yet we did at last, soaked to the skin, at around 9:30 o'clock.

It seems to me now that I never enjoyed a happier fifteen minutes than I did then just before falling asleep in my chair while Brother Bill read the first page or two of that novel aloud to me.

But here's the real punch to my story. Some time ago, having received

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a big bunch of novels from a party in the West, or near West, I sat here looking them over, when suddenly I got the thrill of my life, for there, plainly stamped on one Comic Library was this—"Jesse Pray, Department Store, East Parsonsfield, Meç"

The continuation of Mr. Leithead's fine article will be resumed next month. It has been interrupted to bring you an excellent article on the future of dime novel collecting by George T. Flaum which I hope will serve to draw the Happy Hour Brotherhood closer together.

## IS INTEREST IN DIME NOVELS DYING?

By George T. Flaum

Does the future hold any promise for the continued survival of the dime novel? Twenty-five years from now will there still be a "Dime Novel Roundup" and a "Happy Hours Brotherhood"? Will the vanished literature of another era still be eagerly sought after, collected and read as it is today? What will become of the fragile old-timers now in the hands of a few hundred collectors scattered about the country?

Twenty-five years from now, large research libraries, already bursting at the seams, may of a necessity be forced to microfilm the majority of their books. Future patrons may do their reading from a reflected picture of an original transposed from space-saving and easily accessible film.

In twenty-five years, exploration and space travel to the moon and perhaps to other bodies in the solar system may be a reality. Inexhaustable atomic energy may propel air-transports; our ships, and our every-day means of travel. As fantastic as it may now seem; but not any more fantastic than television; the electronic microscope, and atomic energy would have been twenty-five years ago, electronic transmission of material objects through the very air and space that surrounds us may be a reality. If sound and light can be organized

and then beamed and hurled across thousands of miles of space, to be received and reproduced again, why not freight and living passengers?

Who then will there be to take a passing interest in the fictitious adventures of Buffalo Bill, Deadwood Dick, California Joe, or some other real or legendary character from the pages of a faded Beadle? Will the lure of Frank Reade and his marvelous inventions; the sleuthing of the Bradys, or the exploits of the Merriwells still be of interest? Are these characters made of the stuff that defies time? Will our hobby be in existence twenty-five years from now?

All these are good questions; all are food for thought, and all will have to await the future for their answers. It has been said that human conduct and history repeats itself and that to find a clue to the future we must consult the past.

And so to the past we will go. Let us find out what dime novel collector's thoughts were on this subject approximately twenty-five years ago. In the January, 1929, issue of the "Happy Hours Magazine" published by Ralph Smith, a reader asked the question, "Is interest in old novels dying out?"

In his letter to Mr. Smith, and we quote from it in part, he goes on to say, "the brotherhood is probably the last order of its kind. The old 'Novel Exchange Union' (an early predecessor of the Happy Hours Brotherhood) has been broken up about twenty years. I cherish a few numbers of our monthly paper; a directory of names, and last, but not least, the fellows I became acquainted with by belonging to the 'Union'."

"And it will be that way again, some years from now. Some will wonder where such a one might be living for I have had letters came back addressed to old friends that I had not heard from in years. We fellows that belonged to the old 'Union' which disbanded because of lack of interest in the organization and in each other, are mighty glad to locate even one old friend we used to know. It is



best to keep a record of each other by holding together at present than to try to hunt old friends in the future and not to be able to find them. The candle of life is going out for me; but I would like the brothers to keep up the order and see if it will not prove interesting with the years."

Following these remarks on the part of this old collector, Ralph Smith had this to say and again we quote from the printed word in part. "Through the 'Novel Exchange Union', Mr. Lahmon made many friends—probably the most of whom he has never seen. Today, in various sections of the country reside many of the old members of the disbanded 'Union'. Perhaps they were thirty years old at the time of the 'Union'. If so, they are fifty now. What would these men and women give today to be able to write to old friends whom they grew to know and to love through the years.

"The Happy Hours Brotherhood is not in danger of disbandment. We have more members on the roll now than we had last year at this time. (Happy Hours Magazine began publication in January, 1925 and continued until the middle of 1936.) Our appeal is limited to those who like novels. It is a constantly narrowing circle. Boys growing into manhood today, have possibly never seen a novel. It behoves each one of us to stick together and to interest new prospective members and grow. The membership fee pays incidental expenses and prints and circulates the magazine. The more members we have, the more circulation and the bigger the paper. What we need is more members."

"The 'Dime Novel Roundup' which is now the only published medium of exchange of information between those interested in the preservation and continuation of the dime novel hobby, first saw the light of day in January 1931 under the guidance of Ralph Cummings. Ralph continued the publication of the magazine for more than twenty years until he handed it over to the present editor and publisher, Edward Le Blanc.

Mr. Le Blanc, although younger in years than many of the readers, is an ardent dime novel collector and along with this writer one of the younger blood, who hope to continue the hobby and the "Happy Hours Brotherhood" far into the future.

And now to some 1953 answers to the not new question, can and will dime novel interest survive in the years to come?

Of course it will survive! It has survived the past twenty-five years since a member then asked this question; it will survive the next twenty-five! As long as there are people who will appreciate and love the old; as long as there are those who believe in preserving the furniture; the letters and the literature of a by-gone era that gave others joy and comfort, so long will collectors of dime novels continue to exist.

Regardless of atomic age; interstellar travel, and all the wonders that are to come, human interest and human sentiment will survive. Today, the "Happy Hours Brotherhood" has as many, if not more readers than it had twenty-five years ago.

More novels have been uncovered from hideaways and attics in the past ten years than ever before. The writer for example has found more than 15,000 in the past eight or nine years and I know of several others who have come across large caches of them from time to time.

All that is necessary to assure the continuance of the hobby is to get new members. Go out among your younger friends; interest them in your hobby. Let them read a few of your novels that may appeal to them. Loan them a few Frank Merriwells; a Nick Carter, a Secret Service, or a Jack Wright or a Frank Reade. Acquaint them with what we have to offer and ask them to join by subscribing to the "Dime Novel Roundup."

Pledge yourself to interest one new person in the hobby in 1953. When you have interested them you'll find that they won't object to paying two dollars for a year's entertainment in



reading our monthly magazine and becoming a member of a national organization.

By doing that you yourself will supply the answer to the question will novels still be collected twenty-five years from now. The answer will be yes if you today will do your part.

### BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW

by Buckskin Bill

I remember that green open arena  
Enclosed with white tents all around,  
At Buffalo Bill's Wild West  
Down at the old show ground.

I set with a thrill in the grandstand  
Watching the Wild West in grand review,

I saw Buffalo Bill introduce his  
rough-riders and Indians  
Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Apache,  
Comanche, Shoshone, Pawnee,  
Sioux.

I saw Buffalo Bill gallop around the  
Arena

Shooting glass balls tossed in the air,  
To the music of the brass band  
He never missed a missile, all were  
shattered there.

In every act Colonel Cody was the  
leading star performer

And I got the biggest thrill,  
For, The King of the Scouts was before me

The Knight of the Plains, Buffalo  
Bill.

I'll never forget that Wild West  
Oh; I got the greatest thrill,  
When I shook hands with Colonel W.  
F. Cody.

The "Dime Novel Hero," Buffalo Bill.  
It was at the rear of the tented arena

At the Colonel's private tent that I  
was his guest,

We talked about his pards of the  
plains

And of the old Wild West.

Yes; I witnessed the old scout in all  
of his glory

When he was presented with a silver  
loving cup,

In the arena at the show grounds

There champagne the old scout did  
sup.

Then they staged an Indian battle  
And Cody and scouts came to the  
rescue,

And they drove off the redskin sav-  
ages,

Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Apache,  
Comanche, Shoshone, Pawnee,  
Sioux.

Then the last of the Great Scouts  
made a bow

And retired from the arena mid ap-  
plause and cheers of thrill,

He backed his steed and waved his  
hat

It was farewell for Buffalo Bill.

### NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

George H. Hess of St. Paul, Minn. was hospitalized for a couple of days in January for food poisoning, but is all right now. We are glad to hear it, George.

C. E. Douglas, 402 Williams St., Vienna, W. Va., is trying to get together a collection of original or reprints of dime novels laid in the Ohio Valley, particularly in W. Va. He also wants Log Cabin Series #11, "The Hatfield-McCoy Feud," by W. B. Lawson, and others.

Hands Up, Your Money or Your Life!—The authentic biographies of Jesse and Frank James, the Younger Brothers of Mo., Billy the Kid and others, with many rare photos, now awaiting publication. Carl W. Breihan, 8329 Bridge Ave., Lemay 23, Mo. says he is trying to secure a reserve list of customers for the first edition of his book. No obligation, no money now, price will be reasonable. Tell your friends—send a letter to the above address stating you will want a copy of this new and fascinating book reserved in your name. Thanks, Rush!

Some more bad news, A. Willard Jaffray, Bellvidere, Ill., died Feb. 13th and if he had lived til the 17th he would have been 84 years old. He loved to read the old timers, and we're all going to miss him, you bet.



Also Victor L. Neighbors, Litchfield, Ill., died Feb. 11th at St. Francis Hospital after being in frail health for years. He was 63. He ran a newsstand, and sold magazines and newspapers for 29 years. Just before his death he sold out to Henry Henske, same address, a very dear friend of his. Another reader of the old timers and member of H. H. Bro.

And have also just heard from Ed Le Blanc that John W. Schaefer, Olympia, Wash., another Bro. member, died along in December, last, after a long illness. To date, since Dec. 16th we've lost 7 members as follows. Dec. 16th, Lacey D. Irwin, Kane, Ill., and John W. Schaeffer, Olympia, Wash. Dec. 23rd, Jesse Harriman, Worcester, Mass., Jan. 5, J. B. Herndon, New York City, Jan. 10, Raymond L. Caldwell, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 13, A. Willard Jaffray, Bellvidere, Ill., and Victor L. Neighbors, Litchfield, Ill. This sure has been a very tough winter for sickness and deaths, and that isn't all, Fred Lee lost his dear mother a short time ago, also Aubrey W. Egerton lost his only sister on Dec. 30th. Aubrey says he and his sister used to read the Tip Top Weekly and had many letters in the Applause columns between 1902 and 1910, and wants to know if any one has any Tip Tops for sale with their letters in them. Aubrey says his last name is spelled Egerton, but it pronounced as if the "d" was in, like Edgerton. Both Aubrey and Fred Lee says it's about the end of the world for them, as they are all alone now, neither one ever getting married, so brother members send them a few lines of cheer, pals.

John Foster, Dade City, Florida, wants a story with Enoch in it, but not Enoch Arden, and not a poem, who has it?

Carl Linville says there's an Alger item in No. 8 of Nick Carter Stories.

Jim Jeffries, age 77, the boxing immortal, died in Burbank, Calif., March 4th. For 6 years he was the Champion of the World.

Bob Frye and L. C. Skinner have been very sick, but are better now.

Wm. H. Bradshaw, 3644 N. Oakley St., Chicago 18, Ill., wants Union Jack (2d) that used to come out every week. Send him your for sale lists of them.

The late Wm. J. Benmers of Philadelphia, was engaged to Laura Jean Libby for 2 years between 1901 and 1903.

Charles Bragin has just brought out a rare reproduction, "The Life and Trial of Frank James," published immediately after the trial by Frank Tousey, Sept. 1883, in Wide Awake Special Number, 24 pages, includes Frank James own story on the stand, verbatim testimony of witnesses, charge of the prosecutor, the judges summation, etc., "first hand" facts on the James Boys, not to be found else where for a buck. This is scarce in any edition.

#### (Advertisements)

#### EXCHANGES COLUMN

40 first editions of Ralph H. Barbour stories for sale or swap. Dan Bundza, 87 New Bond St., Worcester 6, Mass.

Wanted: early nos. Liberty Boys of '76 and many nos. of Frank Reade, Jr., Weeklies. Howard J. Fahrner, 789 St. Paul St., Rochester 5, New York.

Wanted: certain titles by G. A. Henty published by Blackie or Scribner. Edward J. Mingey, Jr., 1830 Land Title Building, Philadelphia 10, Pa.

Wanted: Science Fiction and fantastic time novels and old magazines which occasionally used such material including Thrill Book and Black Cat. Walter A. Coslet, P. O. Box 6, Helena, Montana.

My advertisement in the preceding number of the Round-up still holds. Albert Johannsen, Box 566, Winter Park, Florida.

Back numbers of the Round-up—price 20¢ per copy or the complete set up to date for \$25.00. Can you beat it. Nos. 1-245 inclusive. Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

For Sale, Do and Dare #14 16 32 33 38 Good \$1.00 each. #20 21 22 31 37 39 very good \$1.50 each. #25 27 36 excellent \$2.00 each. Edward T. Le Blanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.



**RECENT RENEWALS, CHANGES AND NEW MEMBERS**

14. John A. Reischmann, 4824 Flamingo Road, Tampa 9, Fla. New address.
40. Aubrey Egerton, 116 W. 6th Ave., Houston 7, Texas. Correction.
60. Joseph G. Bernhard, 4409 E. Main St., Columbus 13, Ohio. Old member.
126. Roy E. Swanstrom, 617½ East Maryland Ave., St. Paul, Minn. New add.
163. W. H. Bradshaw, 227 W. 88th St., Los Angeles 3, Calif. New address.
172. Wilbur Duer, 230 14th Street, Kansas City 2, Kansas. New address.
203. Edward J. Mingey, Jr., 1830 Land Title Bldg., Phila., Pa. Correction.
204. Edmond LeBlanc, South Ashburnham, Mass. Old member.
205. L. Kurzrok, M.D., 9 East 96th Street, New York 28, N. Y. New member.
206. John Hildebrand, 12 Roosevelt Court, Brooklyn 32, N. Y. New member.
207. Ben Green, 5126 Riverton St., North Hollywood, Calif. New member.

**Beique's Swappers and Collectors Directory**

of hobbies of all kinds, stamps, coins, novels, post cards, old newspapers, circus, Indian relics, books and what not, over 1000 addresses and their hobbies for only \$2.50. Sent postpaid.

Vol. 1 No. 1

just out, only 250 copies published, send your orders, before they are all gone.

**Ralph F. Cummings**

**Fisherville, Mass.**

**THOUSANDS OF NOVELS WANTED**

Send list, description and price.

**George T. Flaum**

**P. O. Box 4041**

**St. Petersburg, Fla.**

**COLLECTORS**

I have the following assortment of desirable novels for sale with a money back guarantee:

Buffalo Bill Stories. Nos. 141 143 134 130 133 163 75, \$1.55 each.

New Buffalo Bill Weekly. No. 334, 50¢.

Buffalo Bill Stories. No. 489. \$1.25.

Brave and Bold Nos. 345 77 332 422 426 385 315 361 247 56 93 70 66 102. \$1 ea.

Beadles ½ Dime Library. Nos. 254 1013 769 327 164 258 76 770 244 673, 75¢ ea.

Diamond Dick, Jr. Nos. 161 166 175 180 189 201 210 211 223 233 219 218 217 215 214 213, \$1.55 each.

Diamond Dick, Jr. Nos. 276278 280 336 626 616 614 612 610, \$1.25 each.

Beadles Dime Library, Nos. 243 255 246 297 649 13 17 43 58 52 658 807 800 699 685 66 32 629 339 20 791 647 122 98 97 682, 95¢ each.

Bowery Boy Weekly Nos. 29 83 85 88 89 97 98 91 96 34, 75¢ each.

Also 200 Secret Service for sale. Send me your want lists.

**Roy E. Morris**

**901 E. Michigan Ave.**

**Orlando, Florida**



# FOR SALE

P. J. Moran

619 Santa Ray Avenue

Oakland 10, California

**BEADLE'S POCKET LIBRARY**— Nos. 46, The Shadow Ship; 103, Chip, the Girl Sport; 104, The Black Schooner; 107, Jack Hoyle's Lead; 110, The Dread Rider; 114, The Mountain Boy; 116, Jabez Coffin, Skipper; 120, Gopher Gid; 130, Gold Trigger, The Sport; 132, Dainty Lance, the Boy Sport; 147, Nobby Nick of Nevada; 151, The Sea Trailer; 160, Buffalo Billy, the Boy Bullwhacker; 183, Jabez Dart, Detective; 185, Bison Bill, the Overland Prince; 189, Old Rocky's Boys; 310, Kit, the Girl Captain; 249, Ranch Rob's Wild Ride; 319, Frisky Frank in Idaho; 321, Billy, the Kid From Frisco; 417, Fighting Fred of Frisco; 449, The Boy Pilot; \$1.40 each, or 11 for \$14. All good condition.

**BOY'S BEST WEEKLY**— Nos. 42 49 50 53 57, excellent, 50¢ each. Don Bernardo's Daughter; a Dick & Fitzgerald 25¢, yellow back item, \$1 excellent.

**GIPSY BLAIR**, the Western Detective. An Ogilvie item. Excellent, \$1.00.

**DICK DOBBS**, No. 7, excellent, uncut, nearly like new, \$1.00.

**ALL SPORTS**, 12 14 16 19 21 29 31, good, 50¢ each.

**CHAMPAGNE CHARLEY**, a DeWitt 50¢ item, excellent. Dated 1868, \$1.00.

Gleason's Monthly Companion, Oct. 1883, excellent, 50 cents.

**FRANK LESLIE'S BOYS OF AMERICA**, June 1874, Jan. 1876, Jan. 1877, fair, 50¢ each.

**LIFE**, March 1, 1883, 50¢.

**Five Cent Library of Adventure and Romance (Seaside)** old black and white, Nos. 8 and 10. Small stamp mark on front of No. 8. Price 75¢ each.

**SEASIDE LIBRARY** No. 87, old large black and white, 50¢.

**HARPER'S FRANKLIN SQUARE LIBRARY**, No. 463. The Russians at the Gates of Herat, 75¢.

**SECRET SERVICE**, No. 789 803 810, good, 60¢ each.

**SHIELD WEEKLY**, No. 11, good, but two small stamps, 50¢.

**ROUGH RIDER**, No. 174, excellent, \$1.00.

**MOTOR STORIES**, Nos. 2 3 11 16. All excellent, 60¢.

**DIAMOND DICK JR.** No. 81, good, \$1; 543 685 720 725, all excellent 75¢ ea.

**BOWERY BOY**, 98 88 89, excellent, (small stamp on No. 89) 60¢ each.

**BOYS HOME WEEKLY**, No. 25, excellent, 50¢.

**FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY**, Nos. 251 322 471, good, 50¢ each.

**WILD WEST WEEKLY**, 772 897, fair, 50¢ each.

**WORK AND WIN**, 190, 848, fair, 50¢ each.

**THREE CHUMS**, 14 26, excellent, \$1 each.

**NEW BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY**, No. 28, excellent, small stamp, 75¢.

**WIDE AWAKE WEEKLY**, 42 87, excellent, \$1 each.

**JUDGE'S LIBRARY**, May, 1895, excellent, 50¢.

**NICK CARTER WEEKLY**, good condition, 452 455 456 467 471 473 475 511

550 551 555 556 558 559 563 564 570 571 572 578 580 581 582 583

584 587 588 593 622 624 640 642 651 659 660 664 666 684 691 695 713

738 804 806 807 819. 75¢ each.

**NICK CARTER STORIES**, good condition, 12 22 70 160, at 75¢ each.

If your order is \$5.00 or more, choose additional free novels to value of 10 percent of your order. All orders sent postpaid.